

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING (CPS) QUESTIONS

Handout 1

OF - Use this checklist of questions prepared by Parnes in 1981 to prod your thinking:

- What would you like to get out of life?
- What are your goals, as yet unfilled?
- What would you like to accomplish, to achieve?
- What would you like to have?
- What would you like to do?
- What would you like to do better?
- What would you like to happen?
- In what ways are you inefficient?
- What would you like to organize in a better way?
- What ideas would you like to get going?
- What relationship would you like to improve?
- What would you like to get others to do?
- What takes too long?
- What is wasted?
- What barriers or bottlenecks exist?
- What do you wish you had more time for?
- What do you wish you had more money for?
- What makes you angry, tense or anxious?
- What do you complain about?

FF - Use Who, What, When, Where, Why and How questions:

- Who is or should be involved?
- What is or is not happening?
- When does this or should this happen?
- Where does or doesn't this occur?
- Why does it or doesn't it happen?
- How does it or doesn't it occur?
- ...and so on

PF - Listing alternative definitions of the problem

One principle of creative problem solving is that the definition of a problem will determine the nature of the solutions. In this step it helps to begin each statement after the question with **In what ways might we (or I)...**

- What is the real problem?
- What is the main objective?

- What do you really want to accomplish?
- Why do I want to this?

IF - The divergent-thinking, brainstorming stage. This is where a variety of idea-generation ("creativity") techniques can be used. Ideas are freely proposed without criticism or evaluation, for each of the problem definitions accepted in the second stage.

SF - Three related steps:

1. Criteria for evaluation listed
2. The ideas are evaluated (evaluation matrix is useful)
3. One or more of the best ideas are selected

Criteria might include:

- Will it work?
- Is it legal?
- Are the materials and technology available?
- Are the costs acceptable?
- Will the public accept it?
- Will higher-level administrators accept it?

AF - Ways to get the ideas into action. This may involve creating an action plan, which is a plan containing specific steps to be taken and a timetable for taking them.